

The Clifton Conference

Editorials in "The Interior," "The Outlook," and "The Congregationalist."

Conference on Work for Negroes

MR. W. N. HARTSHORN, chairman of the International Sunday-School Executive Committee, who has given to his home at Clifton, Mass., a unique fame through the epochal conferences on Sunday-school development there convened under his private hospitality, has added to the series what has been in some respects the most impressive assemblage of all — a conference on Sunday-school work among Negroes. Mr. Hartshorn brought together at Dyke Rock, as he has christened his home, a company from seventeen states and twelve denominations, representing practically all the religious forces at work among the colored people to-day. One third of the guests were colored men, leaders of the race for whose advancement this counsel was taken. Thirty-four institutions of learning working for Negro education were represented. The two most conspicuous figures in the gathering were eminent veterans of the war between the states, — one from each army, — Gen. O. O. Howard, of the Federal troops, and Gen. R. D. Johnston, of the Confederate forces, now resident at Birmingham, Ala. There was full and candid discussion of the Negro problem under four heads: The Negro in Slavery Days, The Negro as a Free Man, The Present Condition of the Negro, The Present Needs of the Negro. It was agreed that moral and religious uplift constitutes the only assurance of the well-being of the race, and that in the present condition of the colored people the Sunday-school is the instrumentality best adapted to impart to them the cultivation and discipline that they require. Mr. Hartshorn's cherished plan for introducing into the colored educational institutions of the South systematic instruction in Sunday-school ideals and methods was unreservedly commended as a practical step in the proper direction. The International Sunday-School Association was earnestly petitioned to push this plan forward to realization, and the Conference appointed a committee of its own to cooperate for furtherance of this measure with the Association's committee on work among Negroes. On the committee thus named the Presbyterian representatives are Dr. James E. Snedecor, secretary of the Southern Church for Colored Evangelization, and Dr. H. L. McCrory, president of Biddle University at Charlotte, N. C. The colored men at Dyke Rock were especially impressed with the significance of this meeting

and cheered by the optimism of it. Bishop Clinton, of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, said: "I believe this is the most important thing done for us since Abraham Lincoln wrote his Emancipation Proclamation." — *The Interior*, Chicago, September 24, 1908.

Two Important Meetings

Two meetings recently held in the interest of American Negroes contribute largely to the record of the progress made by the race. In Baltimore, from the 20th to the 21st of August, gathered representatives of more than four hundred local and six state organizations, constituting the National Negro Business League. Each year the League holds a meeting which is characterized chiefly by personal testimony from its members concerning their achievements. For example, this year a Negro truck farmer from Florida, one of the pioneer melon-growers of his region, told how he started by renting a farm of three acres, and developed his business until now he owns more than six hundred acres of land. When he was asked from the floor whether he employed white or colored labor, he answered, "Well, I mix 'em." A Negro undertaker told how he started by making a hearse and coffins. Now he owns four hearses, eighteen horses, twelve hacks, fourteen landaus and two cemeteries. When Dr. Booker T. Washington, who presided at the meeting, asked him why he had two cemeteries, he explained that the owner of the white cemetery charged so much for graves that he had to buy a graveyard; and that later the white cemetery was offered to him at an attractive figure, and he added, "And I bought it, so that now I have no competition." It was another undertaker who reported that he had "departed quite a few of 'em." The League was founded nine years ago under the leadership of Dr. Washington, and its influence in the encouragement of thrift and self-respect is recognized wherever the organization is known. The city of Baltimore honored the League and distinguished itself by officially decorating Druid Hill Avenue with electric lights. The City Council, besides appropriating money for this purpose, granted the use of one of the city boats for an excursion of visiting members of the League. It is in Baltimore, by the way, that is to be found, on the whole, the best-environed Negro community in the United States. On Druid Hill Avenue are the houses of the more successful Negroes, and the houses of the less successful are on the tributary streets and avenues. This Negro community has